

## **A PRELIMINARY STUDY ON THE INTEGRATION OF NAQLI AND AQLI KNOWLEDGE: USIM EXPERIENCE IN ENGLISH FOR PROFESSIONALS COURSE**

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### **Abstract**

This paper is a preliminary study on the integration of *Naqli* (revealed) and *Aqli* (non-revealed) knowledge in English for Professionals course in Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia USIM. English for Professionals course is an English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) course that has been made a compulsory subject for all FPQS, FKP, FSU (Fiqh and Fatwa major), and FSK undergraduates since 2015. As an institution of higher learning promoting the integration of *Naqli* (revealed) and *Aqli* (non-revealed) knowledge, there is growing need for this English for Professionals course to produce future Muslim professionals imbued with Islamic etiquettes whose life and work are based on the principles of Islamic worldview as prescribed by in the Quran and the Sunnah. This paper, thus, revisits the concept of integration of *Naqli* and *Aqli* knowledge and its significance in reforming education in general. This paper also evaluates the current English for Professionals course and highlights what remains as the uphill tasks in the formation of the course curriculum design, material development and instructional design as well as pedagogy to support such noble aspiration. At the end, the paper discusses some possible implications and limitations of the efforts and offers some distinctive suggestions on areas for further research.

*Keywords: English for Professionals, Naqli-Aqli; curriculum; instructional design; material development*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Recent development has witnessed the proliferation of higher education institutions HEIs promoting Islamic worldview in their education. Historically, the International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM) is the first Malaysian university to integrate Islamic

knowledge and worldly knowledge through its Islamization of knowledge. The concept of Islamization of knowledge comes into being when Muslim scholars around the world view the demarcation between the two types of knowledge is the root of all political, economical and socio-cultural crisis in the world which lead to the decline of Muslim community (*ummah*) from its remarkable past achievements and excellent tradition. As Islam is a complete, comprehensive (*syumul*) and perfect religion as stated in Surah Al- Maidah verse 3, Islam transcends beyond mere belief and worship, offering itself as a way of life to cover all aspects of human life inclusive of relationship between man and Allah SWT, man and his fellow human being, man the unseen world like *Jinns* as well as man and their environment. Quite recently, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM) advocates similar concept and bridges the gap between Islamic knowledge and worldly knowledge through its promotion of *Naqli* and *Aqli* integration. Established in tandem with the aspiration of the government to produce knowledgeable, virtuous and credible Islamic leaders who can restore the stature of Islam, USIM thus, strives to bring progress for the Muslim community as well as the global community by offering the integration of *Naqli-Aqli* knowledge in its education.

That being said, this paper aims to describe our practice as instructors for English for Professionals (EPRO) in USIM. Specifically, we aim to highlight what we have learned thus far regarding best practices and improvements regarding EPRO's material development, course curriculum, and instructional design, in view of *Naqli-Aqli* integration. Our objectives are two-fold, firstly to revisit broadly *Naqli-Aqli* curriculum and secondly to map these *Naqli-Aqli* points onto our EPRO classroom experiences. By framing our paper this way, we are able to bridge the gap between what we know of *Naqli-Aqli* knowledge and how we translate these points onto our experience in EPRO classrooms.

This paper is important for the fundamental reason in that it will add to contemporary debates surrounding the use of *Naqli-Aqli* in curriculum. From teaching, learning, designing curriculum to selecting materials and reflecting on the outcomes, they enrich our understanding regarding the visible presence of Islamic precepts. Although the following discussions are only somewhat limited to curriculum, material development , and instructional design together with pedagogy , they shed lights into what it means and how to teach EPRO surrounding the flourishing notion of *Naqli-Aqli*. We, thus, begin by reviewing literature on education and Islam, *Naqli-Aqli* in USIM, and our discussions on best practices of EPRO in light of *Naqli-Aqli*. Conclusions and suggestions for future research are also provided. Through these sections, they present rich, useful knowledge on how *Naqli-Aqli* knowledge, albeit limitations, are conducted in English unit.

## **EDUCATION AND ISLAM**

Qur'an and the traditions of Prophet Muhammad have many references to emphasize education and learning, plus observation, and the use of reason to enhance knowledge and skills. The first verse of the Qur'an revealed to the Prophet Muhammad reads "*In the name of thy Lord who created man from a clot. And thy Lord is the Most Generous Who taught by the pen, taught man that which he knew not.*" (Quran, 96: 1-5)

In another verse of the Qur'an, the significant of education and knowledge is highlighted as it reads "*Are those who have knowledge and those who have no knowledge alike? Only the men of understanding are mindful.*" (Quran, 39:9)

The peculiar concept of education in Islam according to Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas (1980) is "Recognition and acknowledgement, progressively instilled into man, of the proper places of things in the order of creation, such that it leads to the recognition and acknowledgement of the proper place of God in the order of being and existence" (p. 11).

Though the concept of education is universal, there is a wide gap between the secular and the Islamic education. While the secular education detach itself from the concept of religion and Godliness (Rosnani and Imron, 2000), in Islam, as argued by Dangor (2005), “education is intended to produce a God-conscious and righteous individual who lives in accordance with the Divine mandate” (p. 519). John Sahadat (1997), as cited in Dangor (2005), argued that an informed individual is not necessarily an educated one; there is an existential challenge in Muslim education which seeks to lead the individual beyond the stage of knowing to the stage of being. The concept of education binds both the physical knowledge and the spiritual knowledge and the term “*ilm* (literally, „knowledge“”) which encompasses all facets of life: intellectual, material and spiritual are often used to refer to this knowledge. Cited Hussain (1977) , Daggor (2005) argued that Islamic education has a balanced growth of the human personality through training its physical, emotional, intellectual, imaginative, as well as spiritual aspects. Dangor (2005), further wrote that “a holistic approach to education from this perspective means cultivation of the mind, development of the inner self and acquisition of intellectual and spiritual virtues” (p. 520). Interestingly, Amar at Talbi (2000) found Muslim philosopher Al-Farabi viewed education must fulfill the purpose of human creation, and the goal of humanity’s existence in this world is to attain happiness by serving Allah, which is the highest perfection by having not only intellectual knowledge, but also the acquisition of moral virtues and practical moral skills, what he later called the perfect human being (*al insan al kamil*).

Thus, it is worth to take note that Daggor’s (2005) comprehensive summary on the objectives of education in Islam advocates education must aim to

- (a) support the acquisition of knowledge, skills and moral virtues.
- (b) support the development of wholesome individuals.
- (c) encourage the promotion of virtue and the prohibition of evil.
- (d) raise God-conscious individuals.
- (e) improve the physical, moral and spiritual well-being of humankind in general.

In essence, the ultimate goal of education in Islam is to realize human potentials and then seek the pleasure and bless of Allah SWT by fulfilling the purpose of human creation itself.

### ***Integration of Naqli and Aqli***

The term *Naqli* or revealed argument literarily means transmitted evidence which refers to the transition of knowledge from authentic textual sources (authorities) such as Al-Quran and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). It is called *Naqli* (revealed knowledge) because the knowledge is derived from authentic sources (the Quran and Sunnah) before it is transmitted to learners. The term *Aqli*, however means logical and intellectual interpretation of any given matter. *Aqli* knowledge (non-revealed) is also known as worldly knowledge.

The integration of *Naqli* and *Aqli* is a twin concept of the Islamization of knowledge that has been conceptualized and discussed from different angles by prominent Muslim scholars such as Al-Attas, Al-Faruqi, Abu Sulayman, Fazlur Rahman, Sayed Ali Ashraf, Sayed Hussein Nasr, Osman Bakr, Muhammad Mumtaz Ali, Mohd. Kamal Hassan, and Sidek Baba. Specifically, Sidek (2009) interestingly defined Islamization of knowledge as a process of infusing an Islamic worldview into an existing body of knowledge. Muhammad Mumtaz Ali (2010) posited that, the early approach of Islamization was considered as its prerequisite in efforts to revamp or revive the Islamic philosophy in Islam.

Many scholars have advocated for the integration of knowledge among the contemporary Muslims. Notably, Abu Sulayman (1994) viewed integration as a marriage between religious sciences and non-religious sciences. Likewise, Sidek (2009) asserted that integration is a process that unifies the triadic concepts namely *ta h di* paradigm i.e the belief in the oneness

of God, values and human potentials in the educational system of contemporary Muslims (as cited in Surajudeen, 2013).

It is pertinent to take note that this concept of Islamization of knowledge is very vital, as some scholars argued, it is “about reestablishing Islam in society” (Normala and Zahariah, 2013, p. 5). And, as what has been quoted from Mahathir Mohamad, there is a need to ensure that

“Islam is responsive to the immediate requirements and concerns of the modern man”, and the reintroduction of it and its application has to be done in a more subtle way, to avoid total rejection of Islam if it were to be presented as a whole set of beliefs and practices.

The need of Islamization of knowledge, as some Muslims scholars (Rosnani and Imron, 2000) argued, is because there have been too much spread of secularization and westernization in our education system, especially for the Muslims, and these are no longer in tandem with the Muslim faith and may actually endanger it. Though the West has continuously claimed that knowledge is universal and value-free, fact tells otherwise. It is thought to be neither. In the same vein, Al-Attas argued that “knowledge is not neutral and can indeed be infused with a nature and content which masquerades as knowledge.”

Similarly, Al-Faruqi (1982) (as cited in Rosnani and Imron, 2000) argued that the ethnocentricity, mainly Eurocentric, of the modern knowledge is no longer universally applicable, not to the Muslims in particular as we have different sets and values which are different from the Western civilization.

## ENGLISH FOR PROFESSIONALS IN USIM

The focus of the study will be on English for Professionals course EPRO, a new course introduced in 2015 under a newly structured English language courses offered by English Language Unit, of the Faculty of Major Languages Studies. Categorized as an English for Occupational Purposes course EOP, it is only offered to students who obtained band 4 and above in their Malaysian University English Test MUET and pass their English for Academic Purposes EAP course. This course is designed to enable the students to use English confidently and accurately in both oral and written communication forms by putting them in the context of authentic professional workplace setting. Through the course, students will develop specific English language and professional skills needed to prepare them for their future workplace. In the course, they learn how to attend job interview, meeting, write proposal, present proposal and work on other office related documents. The course is therefore, is tailored to prepare students for their future professional undertakings. Deliberate efforts have been taken to shape English for Professionals course to fit into the Islamic worldview where integration of *Naqli* and *Aqli* knowledge can materialize.

**Table 1. Integration of Aqli and Naqli Components in the Course Curriculum**

<p><b>Skills:</b> Oral and Written Communication (Vocabularies, expressions and ethics)</p>	<p><b>Employment seeking skills:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing Letter of application, resume and attending job interview</li> </ul> <p><b>Meetings and negotiation skills:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing Memos.</li> <li>• Calling for meeting</li> <li>• Handling effective meetings</li> <li>• Preparing Minutes of meeting</li> </ul> <p><b>Project management Skills:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing proposal</li> </ul>
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English for Professionals course EPRO focuses on two corporate and professional core skills, which are oral and written communication. As shown in Table 1, for both skills, the course curriculum not only guide students on the specific formats of oral and written communication, but also the appropriate language forms and Islamic ethical elements. The two skills also expose students both to pre-employment and during employment preparation. For pre-employment preparation, students are taught to write letter of application, curriculum vitae and trained for job interviews. Elements of Islamic ethics are deliberately highlighted and discussed in order to emphasize the importance of upholding Islamic qualities such as hardworking, committed, competent, and ethical values such as honesty, and sincerity and their roles in professionalism. Students recollect, discuss and examine the Islamic qualities and ethical values based on the history (*sirah*) of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). The concept of work as worship (*ibadah*) and its significance in enhancing intrinsic motivation, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment, which lead to higher productivity and performance is emphasized as students determine their job selections and work on their job applications. Besides, the course also places great importance on the observation of tactful and polite language usage in both oral and written communication.

In meeting and negotiation skills development, the course centers around the concept/principle of consultation (*syura*), along with the Islamic values of justice, equality and human dignity in real professional workplace setting. Students are taught how to indicate stands, ask for clarification share ideas or opinions, deal with differences, expressing agreement or disagreement and negotiate effectively. Discussion also refers to the practice of diplomacy in Islam and its significant contribution in the history (*sirah*) of Islam.

While for project management skills, students are exposed to proposal writing and proposal presentation. Proposal projects stresses the spirit of volunteerism and exposes students to the corporate social responsibility project as it is commonly practiced by many companies and organizations in the real world. Unlike the concept of volunteerism and corporate social responsibility CSR in the western perspective though, English for Professionals course takes a rather holistic approach that suits Islamic perspective based on the teachings of the *Quran* and the *Sunnah*. Dusuki (2008) cited Al-Attas (1996) that the concept of CSR in Islam encompasses a broader meaning embracing the sense of God-consciousness (*takwa*) by which people or companies assume the roles and responsibilities as servants (*abdul*) and vicegerents (*khalifah*) collectively in all situations. Such exposure to volunteerism and CSR is seen as a way to enhance not only students' sense of social responsibility, but also the sense of responsibility to God. Hence, the inclusion of volunteerism and CSR in EPRO curriculum serves as an important component which links *Naqli* and *Aqli* knowledge as Dusuki (2008) cited Ahmad (2002), the fact that " the moral and ethical principles derived from divine revelations are more enduring, eternal, and absolute " (p.13)

**Table 2. Integration of Aqli and Naqli Components Materials Development & Instructional Design and Pedagogy**

<p><b>Offline</b> Samsiah Abdul Hamid, Rosyati Abdul Rashid. (2012) <i>Mastering English for Employment</i>. Malaysia: Cengage Learning.</p> <p><b>Online:</b> Moodle platform known as Global Open Access Learning System GOALS</p>	<p><b>Tools:</b> Moodle quiz feature, class videos, YouTube videos, PDF supplementary materials, online links.</p> <p><b>Pedagogy</b> Tutorial - offline and online Dialogue Pair work Group discussion Peer evaluation</p>
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As illustrated in Table 2, A fair combination between offline and online materials are used in the course. A local book has been adopted as the main reference. The selection of the book is done based on the contents as well as the visual representation of the book. Though the book contains some visual presentation that may not reflect Islamic teaching such as the images of women in non-Islamic attire, the images are considered to be acceptable culturally. In addition, it is felt that the course should expose students to the reality of the professional and corporate world outside campus life. Meanwhile, the online materials or contents are extended via Moodle platform, specifically USIM Global Open Access Learning Systems GOALS. The success of online learning relies heavily on the trust that is mutually build between instructors and students. The sense of God-consciousness and trustworthiness underpin the online components as students constantly have to practise honesty, self-responsibility and be accountable for their own learning.

Sahin (2013) posited that “The Quran, by defining human existence as educational in character, makes the competence for reflection, dialogue and self-transformation part of what it means to be a human being. Moreover, the Quran, as the Divine curriculum, suggests a distinct set of pedagogies that aim to encourage learners and communities to practice these qualities.” Therefore, like many other traditional Islamic teaching, the role of instructors remains integral in EPRO instructional design and pedagogy, though generally students have to play more active roles in classes. The element of collaboration (*Ta’auun*) inspired by Quranic teaching that Muslims should collaborate, support each other, and join in the righteous affairs forms a crucial role in the instructional activities and pedagogy. Instructors-students and students-students collaboration, open communication or dialogue and consultation both in formal and informal manners are practiced throughout EPRO curriculum delivery. By practising this, students are able to essentially use English language, built confidence, foster social skills and develop critical thinking skills along the way. As they do so, they also observe Islamic guidelines on gender relationships.

The use of Islamic English and terms is also practiced in order to immerse students in professional Islamic workplace setting. The concept of Islamic English - the modification of the words in the English language to allow it to carry the Islamic proper nouns and meanings without distortion - was first introduced by Al-Faruqi (1986). It was to prevent the distortion the words and meanings of the original Islamic words when used in the English context. In close examination, some of the Islamic words, as well as their concepts, such as words like *iman*, *adab*, *amal*, *halal*, *haram*, *fitrah*, *ikhlas* and many others do not have close, or even any, direct transliteration in the English language; thus, the absence of direct translation of these words may cause difficulties for the Muslim users of the English language in expressing such concepts. The use of Islamic English is also important to dispel any tendency to regard English language use as a linguistic colonization of non-muslims as whether one likes it or not, English language will continue to be a relevant and leading international and/or professional language in countless workplace globally.

To overcome the issues of the distortion of the Islamic terms among the students, and the difficulties in expressing themselves in English, as well as to streamline with the concept of *Naqli* and *Aqli*, the introduction, or insertion, of these Islamic words and terms in the English language programmes at the institutions of higher learning is one solution. In the English for Professional course EPRO, the lexical used in the programme thus, is expanded to include Islamic vocabulary whenever appropriate and needed. Whilst using English, Islamic words which are primarily Arabic words are used particularly in spoken discourse.

## CONCLUSION

The current choices left between the religious traditional education and the secular modern could lead to conflicts between people and ethical crises, eventually leading to a split between people, poor professionalism and productivity. Thus, as discussed in this paper, there is a dire need to re-establish the concept of Islamization of knowledge in the current education system especially to meet the needs of the modern Muslim society. In teaching and learning a language, English in this context, culture and values are not detachable. To prevent negative influence of the Western ideas and values, and to inject the notions of *Naqli-Aqli* precisely in the context of Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia USIM, there is a need for a modification of the content and the curriculum, material design, instructional design and pedagogy. Doing so does not only to create awareness of the set values as presented in Islam to our students, but also to guide them how to embrace these concepts in all aspects of their learning, without shying them away nor forcefully put on them. Future research can concentrate on the ways in which *Naqli-Aqli* practices are translated at real workplace, by taking into account reflection and qualitative responses of former EPRO students. Reviewing EPRO curriculum, through pragmatic and Islamic lenses is also a gap in which future researchers can take up. The application of Islamization of knowledge or the integration of *Naqli* and *Aqli* in English for Professionals EPRO, thus, could be a starting point of this, and could later be applied in other English language courses. As said by Khairiah (2013), "Islamization in the English language teaching will ensure the values, beliefs, aspirations and aims reflected in the teaching of English are in harmony with the principles of Islam and hence, fulfills the aim of Muslim education which is to create the „good and righteous man“ who worships Allah" (p.

12). With that, EPRO course improvements must remain as a continuous effort and struggle (*jihad*) as inspired by Islam.

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